

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 2359

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, PINT, UY
SUBJ: ARMED FORCES' SPOKESMAN GOES PUBLIC WITH POINTS OF
GENERAL ORDER 7777

REF: MONTEVIDEO 2315 (DTG R 151155Z JUL 78)

1. JULY 18, THE GOU COMMEMORATED CONSTITUTION DAY WITH A PUBLIC OFFICIAL CEREMONY AND PARADE, HOSTED BY ARMY CINC ALVAREZ, AND FEATURING LENGTHY SPEECHES BY MINDEF RAVENNA AND ARMY COLONEL ARREGUI. IN SPITE OF WARM, SUNNY WEATHER ATTENDANCE WAS SPARSE, LARGELY LIMITED TO MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES, MANY BROUGHT TO CONSTITUTION SQUARE BY GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION. IN SPITE OF DOMINANT MILITARY AND OFFICIAL PRESENCE, PRESIDENT MENDEZ WAS WELCOMED BY ONLY SMATTERING OF APPLAUSE FROM A SMALL GROUP DIRECTLY GREETING HIM ON ARRIVAL.

2. THE VERMONY'S HIGHLIGHT WAS THE SPEECH BY COL.
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ARREGUI (COMMANDER OF THE FIRST CAVALRY REGIMENT), DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE ARMED FORCES. FOLLOWING A LENGTHY HISTORICAL REVIEW, RITUAL CASTIGATION OF THE COMMUNISTS (RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF URUGUAY'S ILLS), AND AN EQUALLY RITUAL WARNING TO THE NATION'S INGENUOUS FRIENDS (READ USG) TO DESIST FROM COUNTERPRODUCTIVE PRESSURE, ARREGUI FINALLY ARRIVED AT THE CENTRAL POINTS OF HIS SPEECH. HE

NOT ONLY REITERATED THE MILITARY'S INTENTION TO ADHERE TO THE PLAN TO RETURN THE GOVERNMENT TO CIVILIAN RULE IN 1981 BUT WARNED THOSE WHO WISH TO WEAKEN AND DELAY THIS PROCESS NOT TO INTERFERE. HE THEN DECLARED THAT THE ARMED FORCES "WILL NOT PERMIT ANY RE-EXAMINATION OF THEIR ACTIONS" UNDERTAKEN DURING THE ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST SUBVERSION. HOWEVER, ARREGUI EMPHASIZED, "THE RE-EXAMINATION WHICH WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE ARMED FORCES, AT ANY MOMENT WHEN THE CORRESPONDING EVIDENCE IS PRESENTED, WILL BE AGAINST THOSE WHO, PROFITING FROM THE SITUATION WHICH THE NATION WAS UNDERGOING, OBTAINED BENEFITS FOR THEMSELVES OR THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, OR ACTED TOGETHER WITH SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS, IN MOMENTS IN WHICH MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES DIED FIGHTING".

3. THE ARREGUI SPEECH WAS GIVEN PROMINENT, STRAIGHTFORWARD TREATMENT BY MODERATE, PRO-GOVERNMENT "EL PAIS", WHILE OPPOSITIONIST "EL DIA" MANAGED TO QUOTE HIS FORCEFUL WARNING ON CORRUPTION THREE TIMES. INTERESTINGLY, NATIONALISTIC HARDLINE "LA MANANA" WENT SO FAR AS TO CHANGE ARREGUI'S WARNING RE CORRUPTION TO LIMIT IT TO THOSE WHO ASSOCIATED WITH THE SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENT OR ACTED TOGETHER WITH SUBVERSIVES.

4. GENERAL ALVAREZ, HIMSELF, WAS INTERVIEWED FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY, DISCUSSING THE "NEW DEMOCRACY" WHICH WILL
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EMERGE FROM THE CURRENT POLITICAL PROCESS AND STRESSING REPEATEDLY, THE "UNITY" OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE SUPPORT AND PROTECTION OF THIS PROCESS.

5. COMMENT: VIA ARREGUI'S SPEECH, GENERAL ALVAREZ HAS, IN EFFECT, GONE PUBLIC WITH AND COMMITTED THE ARMED FORCES TO THE THREE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF HIS RESERVED GENERAL ORDER 7777 (REFTEL). HE HAS MADE CLEAR, ONCE AGAIN, THAT THE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC RULE WILL TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED. HE HAS DECLARED A DE FACTO AMNESTY FOR ARMED FORCES MEMBERS GUILTY OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE PAST, WHILE LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN TO MOVE AGAINST ANYONE (INCLUDING MILITARY PERSONNEL) INVOLVED IN CORRUPTION. THIS LATTER POINT HAS, PRESUMABLY, NOT BEEN MISSED BY THOSE HARDLINE ELEMENTS FEELING INCREASING PRESSURE FROM ALVAREZ AND HIS ADHERENTS. AND, IT IS BEING GREETED BY THE LEADERS OF THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES AS ANOTHER ENCOURAGING SIGN OF THE APPARENT GROWING STRENGTH OF THE MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES.
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